

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 03144 081830Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-02 L-03 INR-10 /030 W
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P R 081735Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6893
INFO PANCANAL
USCINCSO

UNCLAS PANAMA 3144

DEPT FOR ARA/PAF AND PAN
USCINCSO FOR J-2 AND PAO
PANCANAL FOR IO

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, PN
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

FOLG SENT ACTION USINFO WASHDC INFO SECSTATE WASHDC P R 081618Z
MAY 78 FROM USICA/PANAMA RPTD YOUR ACTION/INFO
QUOTE
UNCLAS
E.O. 11652: N/A
MEDIA RAEACTION

1. PANAMA CITY.--COVERAGE AND COMMENTARY OF CANAL ISSUE AND
UPCOMING CARTER VISIT LIGHT IN WEEKEND AND MAY 8 MEDIA. MAY
6 LA ESTRELLA FRONT PAGES AP ITEM SAYING OUTGOING COSTA RICAN
PRESIDENT ODUBER WILL ATTEND CARTER-TORRIJOS CEREMONY.

2. MATUTINOH COLUMNIST RICARDO LINCE MAY 8 HAILS CARTER VISIT AS
SYMBOL OF "SPIRIT OF JUSTICE AND BROTHERHOOD WHICH SURROUNDED
FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT WHEN HE VISITED THIS NATION...THE
PRESENCE OF THE U.S. PRESIDENT IN PANAMA WILL BRING TO THE
ACT OF EXCHANGE OF DOCUMENTS OF RATIFICATION...AND UNDENIABLE
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HISTORIC AND MORAL VALUE." ACTUAL CEREMONY SHOULD BE AT THE
PANAMANIAN LEGISLATIVE PALACE, SAYS LINCE.."THERE PRESIDENT CARTER,
SUPPORTED BY THE PROGRESSIVE FORCES OF HIS COUNTRY WHO FORSEEE
HEMISPHERIC BROTHERHOOD THROUGH MUTUAL RESPECT, WILL SEAL WITH
GEN. TORRIJOS A TREATY WHICH BEYOND ITS TEXT IS VALUABLE BECAUSE
IT SUSTAINS THAT SPIRIT OF PRES. CARTER AND THAT HISTORIC AND
MORAL RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF NATIONS, WHICH PROMPTED HIM,

AS IN PANAMA'S CASE, TO DEFY AND CONQUER THE FORCES OF DESTRUCTION AND...ARROGANCE."

3. FELLOW MATUTINO COLUMNIST MIGUEL ANGEL MORENO, HOWEVER, CONTINUES TO RAISE LONELY VOICE IN CALL FOR SECOND PLEBISCITE ON TREATIES, AND MAY 8 PRINTS TEXT OF MAY 2 LETTER TO PRES. CARTER FROM EX-UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA LAW SCHOOL DEAN CESAR QUINTERO, ASKING CARTER NOT TO ADD SIGNIFICANCE BY HIS VISIT TO TREATIES WHICH ARE NOT FULLY APPROVED BY PANAMANIAN PEOPLE. QUINTERO LETTER HAS CIRCULATED OPENLY FOR SEVERAL DAYS AND HAS BEEN DISCUSSED ON RADIO, BUT MORENO COLUMN IS FIRST PRINT APPEARANCE.

4. QUINTERO TELLS CARTER THAT "WE WHO OPPOSED THE TREATIES... CAN ONLY FEEL DEPRESSION BEYOND WORDS AT YOUR PRESENCE IN THE PROPOSED ACT, SINCE IT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS...A GESTURE TO PUBLICLY SUPPORT DOCUMENTS WHICH ARE SO CONTROVERSIAL IN OUR COQNTY AND IN YOURS." QUINTERO POINTS OUT TREATIES WILL PROBABLY NOT GO INTO EFFECT UNTIL OCT. 1, 1979: "WHY THEN THIS HURRY TO CELEBRATE A PREMATURE AND POMPUS CEREMONY EMPTY OF REAL JURIDIC VALUE?"

5. PRESIDENT'S PRESENCE AT ACT MARKING TREATIES AS AMENDED BY SENATE, SAYS QUINTERO, "COULD MEAN DECISIVE SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE CELEBRATION OF A PLEBISCITE, AND THUS COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A FIRST AND SIGNIFICANT INTERVENTION BY YOUR GOVZRNMNT INTO STRICTLY INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PANAMA...I BEG YOU, UNCLASSIFIED

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MR. PRESIDENT, NOT TO COME TO PRESIDE OVER A DEPRESSING CEREMONY...WE UNDERSTAND THAT UNDER THE CURRENT HISTORIC CIRCUMSTANCES, NO ONE COULD PREVENT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE TREATIES. LIKEWISE WE KNOW THAT THEY WILL BE THE SOURCE OF UNFORTUNATE TENSIONS AND SERIOUS CONFLICTS IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE."

6. MORENO DEVOTES MAY 6 COLUMN TO CHASTISING PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT FOR NOT HOLDING NEW PLEBISCITE: "THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE QUESTION OF THE TREATIES DOES NOT REST PURELY ON THE MEN WHO MAKE UP THE GOVERNMENT, NOR IS IT A QUESTION OF PRIDE OR HONOR OF THIS OR THAT PERSON WHO WANTS TO IMPOSE HIS CRITERIA; IT IS NOT EVEN A QUESTION OF OFFICIAL POLICY...THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD UNDERYTAND THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ASSUMING THE EXPRESSION OF THE POPULAR CONSCIENCE, WITHOUT HAVING DULY LISTENED TO IT, GOES BEYOND THE NAME OF ITS MEMBERS...BECAUSE WHEN HISTORY CONDEMNS THE MACERATION OF THE NATION'S PRESTIGE, IT WILL NOT PARDON THE EXECUTORS OF THIS VIOLENCE, NOR ITS DESCENDENTS. FEW KNEW BUNEAU-VARILLA, BUT THE WHOLE NATION AND THE WORLD HAS ENGRAVED IN THEIR MEMORIES THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS NEGOTIATING PROCESS."

7. MORENO CONCLUDES, "A PLEBISCITE TO APPROVE THE NEW TREATIES WHICH THE U.S. SENATE SENT US IS THE ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE THE UNITY OF THE PANAMANIAN FAMILY...BUT IF THE GOVERNMENT INSISTS IN ITS STUBBORNNESS AND IMPOYES ITS CRITERIA BY MEANS OF THE DOMINATION WHICH IT HAS OVER THE WHOLE COUNTRY, THEN HISTORY WILL JUDGE IT AND MAKE IT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TEARS WHICH ONE DAY MUST FALL, WHEN OTHER GENERATIONS RISE UP AGAINST PERPETUITY AND INTERVENTION."

8. MAY 8 CRITICA FRONT PAGES EXCERPTS OF LATIMES STORY QUOTING GOV. PARFITT AY SAYING "ANYONE PREDISPOSED AGAINST THE CHANGE WILL LEAVE (CANAL ZONE) ON HIS OWN." STORY IS HEADED. "GOV. PARFITT SAYS HOTHEADS SHOULD LEAVE ZONE."

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9. CRITICA RUNS FRONT-PAGE HEAD AND PHOTO, INSIDE FULL-PAGE INTERVIEW WITH AMB. JORDEN ON HISTORY OF CANAL TREATIES. IN INTRO TO INTERVIEW, WHICH IS TO CONTINUE MAY 9, REPORTED CARLOS J. NUNEZ SAYS INTERVIEW GIVES IDEA "OF POSITIVE ATTITUDE OF SOME NORTH AMERICANS WHO CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THAT THE WORLD OF TODAY IY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF 1903. AMB. WILLIAM JORDEN IS PRECISELY THIS KIND OF NORTH AMZRICAN, WITH HIS OWN MENTALITY OF THE NEW DIMENSIONS OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD."

10. COVERAGE OF MRS. CARTER'S VISIT TO COSTA RICA VERY LIGHT, AND LIMITED TO FEW SHORT WIRE ITEMS. ITEM
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JORDEN

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NNN

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